

**State Board of Education
September 21, 2010
Item L**

Team: Marissa Parisi, Exec. Dir., Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger
Dorigen Keeney, Dir. of Public Policy and Research, VTCECH

Discussion Topic: Hunger in School Age Children and the Importance of School Meals for Learning and Health

Alignment with Goals:

Goal Three: Learning environments and instructional practices support multiple ways of learning, yield deep understanding and application of essential know and skills, and ensure the success of every student.

Purpose of Discussion:

We would like to provide Information to the State Board about:

- Current research on hunger and benefits of school meals
- Data on schools participating in school meals and meals in out of school programs
- Data on the impact of monthly direct certification: Increased enrollment in free school meals
- Challenges for school meal programs
- How our organization works with schools, DOE, and state and federal policy makers to improve nutrition for children.

We ask the Board to consider nutrition as an integral part of the school environment - meaning that food and nutrition would be part of the curriculum and the cafeteria would be integrated into the educational process.

Staff Available:

Deborah Quackenbush, Director, General Supervision and Monitoring;
Laurie Colgan, State Director, NSLP

Vermont Hunger Facts

Food Insecurity (2006-2008, 3 year average from US Census)

Food insecurity is defined as the lack of access to enough food to fully meet basic needs at all times due to lack of financial resources. Adults in households determined to be food insecure are so limited in resources that they are running out of food, reducing the quality of food their family eats, feeding their children unbalanced diets, or skipping meals so their children can eat.

- **12% of all households food insecure***
- **23,000 children live in food insecure households (18%) ****
- **11% of seniors over age of 60 live in food insecure households ****
- **32% of Vermonters could not afford either enough food or enough nutritious food†**

Food Insecurity with Hunger (2006-2008, 3 year average from US Census)*

Households that are classified as food insecure with hunger are those in which adults have decreased the quality and quantity of food they consume because of lack of money to the point where they are quite likely to be hungry on a frequent basis, or in which children's intake has been reduced due to lack of family financial resources, to the point that children are likely to be hungry on a regular basis and adults' food intake is severely reduced.

- **5.7% of all households food insecure with hunger***

Vermont is ranked 6th hungriest in the nation

Emergency Food

- **12,290 Vermont children depend on food shelves each month‡**

* "Household Food Security in the United States, 2008," www.ers.usda.gov. The food insecure households with hunger are a subset of the total food insecure households.

**Data on Vermont children and seniors living in food insecure homes from 2006-2008 Current Population Surveys of the US Census, through DataFerrett.

† Data from 2010 Vermonter Poll

‡Emergency food data from "Report on the 2008 Survey of Vermont Food Shelves and Community Kitchens," Planning, Policy and Regulation Unit, Economic Services Division, VT Dept for Children and Families, April 2008

Hunger and Malnutrition in Children Has Effects on Health, Well-being, and Lifelong Success

Children living in food insecure homes are at greater risk for....*

- Poor quality diets
- Nutrient deficiencies
- Increased risk for obesity
- Developmental delays
- Poor academic performance
- Increase in aggression, depression, and hyperactive behavior

Federal Nutrition Programs Improve Health and Well-Being*

- *Participation in Food Stamps (3SquaresVT in VT) reduces food insecurity and improves children's diet quality*
- *Participation in Food Stamps (3SquaresVT in VT) and/or WIC decreases risk of poor health, anemia and malnutrition*
- *Food Stamps (3SquaresVT in VT) and WIC participation is associated with decreases in child abuse*
- *Participation in Food Stamps (3SquaresVT in VT) and school meals reduces obesity in school-age girls*
- *Children in families with Food Stamps (3SquaresVT in VT) have higher achievement in math and reading*
- *Children who participate in school meals have improved diets and lower risk for diabetes*
- *Participation in school meals improves student behavior, social interactions, and academic performance*

**For references/sources, contact Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger at vtcech@vtnohunger.org or 802-865-0255.*



Best Practices for Vermont School Meal Programs

INCREASE ENROLLMENT OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE/REDUCED PRICE MEALS

- **Encourage ALL students, regardless of eligibility to return free/reduced price school meal applications.** Schools have found that this helps to remove stigma for low-income students and reaches those families who mistakenly think they are not eligible.
VT schools have gotten all students to return the applications by:
 - Like other mandatory forms, asking all parents to return the free/reduced form, whether or not they have completed the application
 - Provided incentives such as free breakfast for a period of time for any student returning the form
 - Class parties when all students have returned the forms
- ***Provide maximum anonymity for students to enroll and participate in free/reduced price meals.***
 - When all students return the application forms, low-income students have more anonymity
 - Install computerized point of sale systems with debit accounts to protect privacy of students obtaining meals (an additional benefit is that these systems greatly reduce staff time spent on record keeping)
- ***Ensure that vulnerable populations of students receive the benefit of free school meals***
The following students are categorically eligible for free school meals:
 - Students who are homeless (living doubled up or in campgrounds or shelters)
 - Students enrolled in the Migrant Education Program
- ***Provide low-literacy or non-English speaking families assistance with completing applications.***
 - Offer assistance with filling out application by phone, at school, or at home
 - Multi-lingual school meal applications are available on the USDA website:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/FRP/frp.process.htm>

INCREASE ACCESS TO SCHOOL MEALS

- ***Provide students enough time to eat***
 - 20 minutes for breakfast and 30 minutes for lunch
- ***Serve breakfast at snack time in elementary schools***
 - Breakfast later in the morning helps feed those who ate breakfast very early, ate an inadequate breakfast, or who forgot to bring snack



INCREASE ACCESS TO SCHOOL MEALS (CONTINUED)

- ***Offer breakfast in the classroom in elementary schools***
 - Makes the meal part of the school day and reduces stigma
- ***Schedule recess before lunch is served***
- ***Keep the cafeteria open between morning and afternoon classes for middle and high school students***
- ***Offer breakfast free of charge to all students***
 - Schools offering free breakfast have increased participation for all students, including those eligible for free meals. Schools with more than 60% of enrollment eligible for free/reduced price meals may be able to afford loss of student payments by efficiencies gained by increased participation.

IMPROVE THE SCHOOL NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT

- ***Reduce, eliminate and/or improve the quality of competitive foods: vending machines, snack bars, a la carte, fundraisers***
 - Limit the hours when such foods are sold
 - Increasing the price of competitive foods compared to federal meals
 - Remove competitive foods from schools altogether
 - Create nutritional guidelines for competitive foods
- ***Make meals more attractive***
 - Provide more choices of entrée options, vegetables, or fruits
 - Increase the use of locally produced ingredients
 - Make plates more appealing: customize plates, vary color and texture, and use brightly colored wrappings
- ***Offer menu choices that are convenient***
 - Provide “Grab ‘N Go” meals that students can eat quickly and easily
 - Chose hand-held foods that include all the required meal components: wraps, sandwiches, yogurt/granola parfaits, burritos, calzones, etc.
- ***Use “Offer vs. Serve” option: reduces waste and cost***
- ***Involve the students in the meal program***
 - Encourage student representation on wellness committees
 - Include students in decisions about menu choices
 - Ask students to conduct taste tests or do surveys of new foods to get student input

Vermont Public Schools Not Participating In the Federal School Breakfast or Lunch Program as Of October 1, 2009

School not taking part in the federal School Breakfast Program

* School not taking part in the National School Lunch Program

ADDISON COUNTY

* # Whiting Village School

BENNINGTON COUNTY

Burr & Burton, Manchester

Stamford Elementary

LAMOILLE COUNTY

* # Elmore School

ORANGE COUNTY

Thetford Academy

RUTLAND COUNTY

* # Sudbury Country School,
Brandon

WINDHAM COUNTY

* # Brookline Elementary

Dummerston Schools

Halifax School

* Marlboro Elementary

* # Newfane Elementary School

* Wardsboro Elementary School

* # Windham Elementary School

WINDSOR COUNTY

* # Albert Bridge School, West
Windsor

* # Barnard Central

Dothan Brook School, Wilder

Hartford High School

Hartford Memorial Middle School

* # Marion Cross School, Norwich

Ottauquechee School

* # Plymouth Elementary School

* # Pomfret Elementary

White River School

NOTES:

- Vermont has 319 public school facilities, of which 23 do not take part in the breakfast program and 13 do not take part in the lunch program. Sudbury Country School took part in both meal programs prior to SY-2008.
- In SY-2008, the elementary schools in Marlboro and Wardsboro joined the breakfast program.
- The Elmore School is a one-room facility.
- All of the above are elementary schools except Burr & Burton, Thetford Academy and Hartford High School. Burr & Burton and Thetford Academy are independent schools designated by the State to serve as the public high school for that district.

Data source: VT Department of Education Child Nutrition Program

How do I apply ?



Just talk to...

- ▶ a teacher, principal or staff person at your local school who you trust
- ▶ the director of a homeless shelter

...and they can help you get **free** school meals for your kids.

*all help is
free and confidential*

Who can I call if I have questions ?

For more information about the school meal program call:

**The Vermont Campaign to
End Childhood Hunger**



toll-free: 1-800-908-5510

or check our website: www.vtnohunger.org

For more information about other services in your area call:
Toll-free: **211**
to speak with the **United Way
Help Line**

For more information about services for homeless youth call:
**The Coalition for Homeless and
Runaway Youth: 802-229-9151**
or check out www.vchryp.info

Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger
180 Flynn Avenue, Burlington VT 05401
1-800-908-5510
October 2006

Is your family facing...
**homelessness or
housing problems?**

Sign up for
free school meals

fast and easy!



Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger
1-800-908-5510

Who is eligible?

Children and youth in families with housing problems that have forced them to live:

- ▶ temporarily with another family
- ▶ in a motel, campground, or car
- ▶ in an emergency, domestic violence, or transitional shelter



—and—

Children and youth who are on their own and...

- ▶ living temporarily with another family
- ▶ living in an emergency, transitional or runaway shelter
- ▶ waiting for foster care placement

What can I get ?

Education Benefits

If your family is living doubled up or in temporary housing, your children may be eligible for...

- ▶ special programs and services
- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ after school programs

Free School Meals

Eligibility for free school meals lasts for the whole school year — even after your family gets permanent housing.



Why school meals?



All parents know that nutritious meals are important for children to grow and stay healthy.

School meals are vital—they

- ▶ help kids stay healthy and get sick less often
- ▶ help kids concentrate on their school work
- ▶ help kids do better in school
- ▶ help improve kids' behavior

Launching in October, 2010: www.schoolmealsvt.com

schoolmealsvt.com

An informational resource and community forum for school food service directors, administrators, parents, and concerned citizens living in Vermont.



Enrollment & Participation

Building Your School's Program

Meals & Menu Ideas

Farm-to-School

More Resources

Contact Us

Sign up for our School Nutrition E-Update:

name

organization

email address

Learn about people who are making a difference in the lives of Vermont kids.

Partner Organizations

- [VT-SNA](#)
- [Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger](#)
- [Vermont FEED](#)
- [Vermont Department of Education: Child Nutrition Programs](#)

Google™ Custom Search



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